



**INSTITUTE FOR
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PRESS RELEASE

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FDA, ethanol industry ignore regulations and allow unnecessary antibiotics in ethanol production

About IATP

Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy works locally and globally at the intersection of policy and practice to ensure fair and sustainable food, farm and trade systems. IATP is headquartered in Minneapolis, Minnesota with an office in Washington D.C.

MINNEAPOLIS – Despite federal regulations to the contrary, unapproved antibiotics used in ethanol production are ending up in animal feed. As the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) fails to enforce its own ruling on the matter, drug companies and ethanol producers are knowingly taking advantage, skirting the rules and driving up unnecessary antibiotic use, according to a new investigation from the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP).

Despite available alternatives, antibiotic use in ethanol production is widespread as a tool to manage bacterial outbreaks. According to FDA and university testing, those same antibiotics remain present in the nutrient-rich leftover corn mash from the ethanol production process, known as “distillers grains” (DGS), that is repurposed and sold as livestock feed to cattle, dairy, swine and poultry producers.

While there is no law prohibiting the sales of DGS containing antibiotic residues, the FDA has quietly ruled that antibiotics used in ethanol production are food additives, thus requiring FDA approval before they can be sold. Yet companies marketing these antibiotics continue to do so as the FDA chooses not to enforce its own rules.

“While there are no available alternatives to antibiotics for human health, there are alternatives for ethanol production,” said author Julia Olmstead, senior program associate with IATP. “The FDA needs to follow the law and prohibit antibiotics sales to ethanol producers.”

Many ethanol producers are already using readily available alternatives to antibiotics, and the regulations for protecting public health are already in place. An immediate ban on the use of antibiotics in ethanol production, halting antibiotic marketing to the ethanol industry by drug companies, and a voluntary transition to antibiotic alternatives by ethanol producers are among IATP’s top policy recommendations.

Read *Bugs in the System: How the FDA Fails to Regulate Antibiotics in Ethanol Production* on IATP.org.

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